

Stand-Up and Sit-Down Exercise

Goal: Allow participants to experience diversity and resolve disputes through communication.

- Demonstrate diversity through an artificial distinction
- Demonstrate the potential of reacting instead of strategizing
- Develop awareness of behaviors that may obstruct or undermine effective communication

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- Chairs for all participants
- Sufficient copies of the **Stand-up** Talkers' Confidential Information Sheet (color:Yellow)
- Sufficient copies of the **Sit-Down** Talkers' Confidential Information Sheet (color:Pink)

Process:

1. Explain to the group that they are going to work on a communication activity while pretending to be co-workers for ThoughtStream Technology.
2. Have group count off in 1s and 2s. Give the 1s the **Stand-up** Talkers' Confidential Information Sheet (color: Yellow) and the 2s the **Sit-Down** Talkers' Confidential Information Sheet (color: Pink)
3. Say: "you are co-workers for ThoughtStream Technology. Recently your computer system has had several crashes. Number 1s, you work in customer relations and sales. You are known as **Stand-Up Talkers**, which means that you cannot speak unless you are standing. Number 2s, you work in programming and troubleshooting for the company's computer system. You are known as **Sit-Down Talkers**, which means that you cannot speak unless you are sitting. Please read through your Confidential Information Sheets. Each Stand-Up Talker must find a Sit-Down Talker with whom to discuss the problem described on your sheets."
4. Tell the group that they will have between 5 and 7 minutes to speak with their partners.
5. While partners are attempting to negotiate/communicate with one another, watch the body language of the participants. Pay special attention to whether the participants move from standing to sitting positions, how the participants speak to one another, and whether one partner is silent so that the other can state his or her position.
6. Be sure to walk among the pairs to ensure that they are moving toward a resolution. **End the activity after 10 minutes.**
7. Bring closure with the following questions:
 - Biases, what are they?
 - Were you comfortable in your role? How did you feel?
 - What did you discover about your biases?
 - What behaviors translate into biases?
8. Review your observations from the process with the group.

Trainer's Notes:

Participants may arrive at their own solutions to the diverse situations. This is positive. Two of many possibilities follow:

- Parties take turns standing and sitting in order for each person to speak. However, it is amazing how some partners refuse to compromise in this manner. Many times one talker will be unwilling to “yield the floor” by being silent and going to the other party’s position to speak.
- Partners come up with some sort of leaning where a Stand-Up Talker leans or steps down a stair in order to be more at eye level.

Stand-Up Talker's Confidential Information Sheet

You are a Stand-Up Talker. You come from a distinguished family of Stand-Up Talkers. You are employed with ThoughtStream Technology and take pride in your work, much of which is customer relations and sales. Recently, your system has had several crashes. Had the information not been backed up, ThoughtStream would have been destroyed. As it was, you have had to spend countless hours waiting for the technology people to restore information while you calmed down aggravated clients.

Your boss hired you to generate income and handle the people issues. When the system crashes, you can't do either. Thank goodness your boss is a Stand-Up Talker and you have such a good relationship. You told him you would explain the importance of fixing the problem to the technology department. He told you to find a solution to this problem by the end of the next week. You also know you will have to give a false deadline to the technology people or it will never be done.

A solution has to exist to stop these crashes. A friend of yours told you that his company fixed a similar problem with a piece of software known as Save-It. Unfortunately that software is in the possession of a Sit-Down Talker.

You don't know why, but you have never been able to get along with the Sit-Down Talkers. You can't understand how they are able to succeed in life with their challenges. For instance, there is no way a Sit-Down Talker could ever have a conversation while walking. When they speak to a group, no one can see them in the back because they are sitting when they lecture.

You dread going to this particular Sit-Down Talker, who has an attitude and likes people to beg for help before finding solutions. It's not your fault that this Sit-Down Talker was born with the sitting and talking challenge. Some people just have bad luck. However, you have to have an answer to this system problem. The Sit-Down Talker has the Save-It software and you need it. Now, go talk!

Sit-Down Talker's Confidential Information Sheet

You are a Sit-Down Talker. Your people have battled discrimination all of their lives. Despite this, Sit-Down Talkers are famous inventors, were incredible pilots in the nation's wars, and are well-respected in almost every field.

You are employed with ThoughtStream Technology and take pride in your work, much of which is programming and troubleshooting. Recently, ThoughtStream's system has had several crashes. Had the information not been backed up, ThoughtStream would have been destroyed. Although no one remembers it, you were the one who created the back-up protocol. You systemized the method that allowed ThoughtStream to store and recapture information in the event crashes occurred. Due to your recapture system, you and the technology people were able to restore information in hours instead of months.

You take a lot of pride in your work and you are embarrassed that what you know to be a great system has crashed on a few occasions. You have spent nights and weekends trying to figure out what the problem is. What is really irritating is that you have people, especially Stand-Up Talkers, coming to you with their solutions. They don't even understand the system, so how could they understand how to fix it? Also, the company's bosses are Stand-Up Talkers. You like your job, so you give respect to them and their suggestions. However, their suggestions usually take you away from really important work.

At first, you thought some software wasn't properly installed, and then you thought that a new software program called Save-It would be a solution. However, it appears that Save-It is just a temporary fix and may cause even more problems. You now believe that the current software programs are not reading each other correctly. You just need people to leave you alone and let you spend two uninterrupted days working on this problem. Unfortunately, the company is run by Stand-Up Talkers. They don't like having Sit-Down Talkers telling them they aren't doing anything new for two days.

Stand-Up Talkers always act superior or as if they pity you. You think there are many great things about being a Sit-Down Talker, and you don't know how you would do your job if you were a Stand-Up Talker. They certainly couldn't sit down at a computer and have the conversations needed to be successful. You are getting a little tired of this second-class treatment. Some Sit-Down Talkers have been speaking with you about forming their own company and want you to be a part of it.

You have just heard that a Stand-Up Talker from sales is coming to speak with you about the crashes. If this person doesn't look you in the eye and listen to what you have to say, you'll keep quiet about the real solution and just do what you're told.